

# CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF  
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART

Fifth Series

ESTABLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, 1832

No. 599.—VOL. XII.

SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 1895.

PRICE 1½d.

## THE YOUNGEST OF THE NATIONS.

It is a bright and interesting picture which Mr Edward Dicey, in *The Peasant State*, has drawn of a new nationality, which under our eyes has sprung into vigorous existence, and gives promise of filling an important place among European communities. The present generation has seen many phases of national progress and change in both hemispheres. On the farther side of the Atlantic the great American people has been welded into a closer unity in the fierce heat of the Secession struggle; in Asia, the vast space between Eastern and Western civilisation has been crossed by Japan in a few giant strides; while in Europe itself the changes wrought by strife and upheaval have equalled these in importance if not in dramatic effect. France has to all appearance finally chosen a Republican government; Germany is an Empire, instead of a heterogeneous multitude of States; Italy, lately a 'geographical expression,' is a compact kingdom; and Turkey, shedding province after province, has continued to shrivel, or, as Lord Beaconsfield put it, to 'consolidate' into complete decrepitude. In admirable contrast to the recent history of the decaying Ottoman Empire is the study presented to us in Bulgaria, a nation born but the other day, and already showing unmistakable signs of adolescence.

It has been manifest for generations past to all observant eyes that the process of decay was advancing rapidly in Turkey, a process which statesmen have striven rather to retard than hasten. There appeared to most of them only one probable solution—namely, that Russia should fall heir to Constantinople, a consummation so devoutly abhorred, that the 'Sick Man' has been most carefully propped up. Recent developments have made the entry of the great Muscovite power into possession not so certain a matter. 'If Turkey in Europe can only hold together for another generation,' says Mr Dicey, 'Bulgaria may possibly become so potent a factor

in the Oriental problem as to alter the conditions under which the Eastern Question will have ultimately to be solved. I do not say that Bulgaria is as yet an effective bulwark against Russian aggression; but I do say that she is in a fair way of becoming such a bulwark.'

The south-east of Europe, framed by the Danube, the Black Sea, the Adriatic, and the Mediterranean, has been a place of battles since the dawn of history. Waves of invasion have swept over it, one race of marauders succeeding and driving out another—Slavs, Bulgars, Turks. For some centuries past the territory which owes its name to the Bulgars has had the Turks for its masters, but nevertheless the Slav race has been the persistent element, wearing out or absorbing the other races, as the subject Anglo-Saxon absorbed the Norman. So that to-day we find there a perfectly homogeneous people, ready to think and act together; the oppression and cruelty of Turkish rule have left no permanent sores, and have affected only superficially the general well-being. It certainly bespeaks a robustness of constitution, a toughness of fibre in the race, that after centuries of a government which elsewhere has uniformly blighted all progress, this nation of peasant proprietors is found prospering—none wealthy, none sunk in poverty. This indeed is the most striking feature of Bulgarian life—the absence both of wealth and poverty, the maintenance of a level of moderate comfort above which few rise, and below which few sink. Out of a population of three and a half millions, about two and a half millions are engaged in agriculture, cultivating their own small holdings, of which the average is about six acres. Practically, they have fixity of tenure, paying a land-tax or tithe of one-tenth of the gross produce, the Government being theoretically the owner, and able to resume possession on the failure of the holder to pay his tithe. The system of payment in produce is undoubtedly burdensome and uneconomical. It renders the farmers reluctant to expend what

is needful on the improvement of their land, the result of any effort in this direction being to increase the amount paid to the State. But notwithstanding its cumbrousness, old custom has rooted the system firmly in the habits of the people. In many agricultural countries the people are victims of the money-lender; but he finds no room in Bulgaria, where small land-banks, called *Caisses Agricoles*, have been established for the purpose of making needful advances to farmers. The capital of these institutions is provided by a compulsory contribution from the landowners in each district, and they have the great advantages of confining their operations to their several localities, and of being partly managed by elected representatives. They have been widely extended in recent years, and have met with the greatest success.

The extraordinary predominance of agriculture in Bulgaria may be accounted for in various ways, but one sufficient reason for it lies on the surface: commerce and manufactures have never flourished under the rule of the Turk. Wealthy industries offer plunder too tempting and too accessible to a rapacious Government: it is not so easy to rob a community of peasants who by thrift and incessant labour wring a scanty living from their few acres. Again, the climate and soil are very favourable both for tillage and for grazing. But whatever the causes, the fact determines the whole character of the social organisation. It appears that in this country of 3,500,000 inhabitants there are only 1647 factories, mills, or 'works' of any kind, and of these, 1206 are small rope-walks. In reality, for the carrying on of commerce or manufactures on any considerable scale, capital is required, which the resources of the people cannot provide. There are not in all Bulgaria five persons who possess over £40,000; there are not fifty whose fortunes exceed £20,000; there are not two hundred who have upwards of £5000.

A further hindrance to the extension of trade in Bulgaria arises from the comparatively low standard of comfort or refinement prevailing among the peasantry. In food, in clothing, and in housing, even the more well-to-do are content with a simplicity of provision which would hardly satisfy corresponding classes in any other country in Europe. In a Bulgarian peasant's cottage 'the floors are of mud; the kitchen fronting the street is also the living-room. Behind, there is a sleeping-room, with a bedstead in it for the head of the house, while the sons and daughters sleep upon mats stretched on the floor. The furniture consists of wooden tables, benches, and chests. The crockery and household utensils of every sort seem of the commonest and coarsest kind. I should doubt if there is a single house in the whole village in which any English labourer or artisan earning good wages would not deem it a hardship to be obliged to live in. At the same time there was no single dwelling which, given the habits and customs of the country, could be fairly described as unfit for human habitation.'

Evidently the lot of the Bulgarian peasant, though fairly comfortable according to his own notions of comfort, is not a particularly bright one. He has the kind of life he desires in

tilling his own fields, for his land-hunger is as keen as that of an Irish cottier. His pleasure he finds in his economies and petty savings, although it is only by a thrift amounting to penuriousness that he has anything over when the ordinary necessities of life, even on a sordid scale, have been provided for. The innocent amusements and enjoyments which give variety and zest to existence seem to be almost entirely absent from his colourless days. A peculiar quietness and stolidity characterise the whole people; even the children play 'quietly and silently.'

Throughout the wide territory of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia, now practically a province of Bulgaria, there is a singular dearth of important towns; and Mr Dicey appears to have found even Philippopolis, the brightest and most cheerful of them all, 'as quiet as the grave or Peebles.' There are, he says, 'no places of entertainment; and by nine o'clock at night the city is quiet, the streets are well-nigh deserted, and the cafés are left empty. An English country town after nightfall is a scene of wild dissipation compared with the Roumeliot capital.' It is probable that the self-contained and stolid demeanour of the people is an effect of their long-continued subjection to an alien tyranny, and will gradually, under the new conditions, give place to manners more natural to freemen. One thing may be with confidence affirmed—the Bulgarian nation has taken very seriously the responsibilities of self-government, and has addressed itself to its new tasks in a manner reflecting the highest credit on its first rulers and counsellors.

This nation of untaught peasants had no sooner attained independence than they resolved to put education, free and compulsory, in the fore-front of their home policy. The grant for this purpose is £350,000 a year, a sum exceeding one-seventh of the entire expenditure of the State. In Great Britain, a proportionate amount would be something between thirteen and fourteen millions. What makes their zeal more remarkable is the fact that the Bulgarian peasantry in scarcely any instance employ hired labourers on their small farms, but till them by their own hands with the help of their families. To give up the children to the schools is therefore a most serious sacrifice, qualified by the arrangement that the holidays shall extend over the harvest-time.

Mr Dicey speaks in glowing terms both of teachers and pupils. He appears to have been particularly struck with the attention and intelligence of the scholars; and as to results, he declares that year after year 'lads are leaving these high-schools with a far better education than nineteen middle-class young Englishmen out of twenty.' The primary schools, which all children between the years of eight and twelve must attend, are supplemented by high-schools, which carry on until the age of eighteen the education of those who can afford to pay sixteen shillings per annum for the privilege. A Bulgarian university is contemplated. Such a state of things is in the highest degree creditable to the nation, although it is not all due to a disinterested love of learning. Mr Dicey thinks we must reckon along with

motives of this kind, first, the conviction that their country will by means of education attain her proper place in the world; and secondly, the desire they naturally entertain to widen the doors of success for their children, especially through admission to the public service.

The children of all ranks and conditions receive one common training in the public schools. Ranks and orders are as yet happily unknown in Bulgaria. It may be dangerous, as has been suggested, in a country where commerce affords so few openings, that so many well-educated youths should be thrown upon society, over-refined for the sordid life of their fathers, and ambitious of public employment. A large class of professional politicians and office-seekers is too probable a result.

Liberal, however, as has been the provision made for education, it is one of the most satisfactory features in the administration of the young State that the characteristic frugality of the inhabitants has been imported into its national finance. The temptation which most forcibly assails a new community in these days is the ease with which it can borrow money, and it needs but a trifling acquaintance with the circumstances of Spanish-American republics and of Australasian colonies to show how seldom the temptation is resisted. Bulgaria has hitherto acted as if she had kept in view these warning beacons, and has displayed even excessive caution. In a country which undoubtedly requires for its due development the expenditure of capital on some kinds of public improvements, it is possible to be too parsimonious. If the Sobranje, however, has erred in this direction, the failing is one that certainly leans to virtue's side. What country placed in analogous circumstances can show, as Bulgaria can, as a net result of her financial administration during the first eleven years of her independent existence, a balance of receipts over expenditure amounting to more than a million and a quarter sterling? The budget of 1894 shows, it is true, an excess of estimated expenditure over receipts of £48,000 in a total of four millions. But this is simply in accordance with the practice hitherto followed by the Ministry of over-estimating expenses and under-estimating income: there will be no deficit at the end of the year. It is, perhaps, desirable to point out that a less roseate view of the financial position in Bulgaria is taken by some of her critics. The Odessa correspondent of a London daily paper has recently stated his opinion that the yearly deficit in the Bulgarian budget is now fifteen million francs, and that a policy of retrenchment must at once be adopted and continued for some years if the young Balkan State is to be saved from disaster; but these conclusions appear to be inconsistent with the facts as stated by Mr Dicey, who sums up the financial position as follows:

'(1) In almost all the ordinary budgets of the State, the estimated expenses have been greater, and the estimated receipts less than they proved to be in reality. (2) From the period when Eastern Roumelia became incorporated with the Principality, there has been a large balance to the good. (3) The £4,000,000 which have been spent on exceptional expendi-

ture, such as the war with Servia, the construction of railways, the supply of rolling-stock, the establishment of the National Bank, and the equipment of the army, have been provided to the extent of about £3,000,000 out of the surplus revenue. Lastly, while the normal revenue is about £3,500,000, the total liabilities of the State as yet accrued do not exceed £5,500,000, or little more than a year and a half's revenue.'

If this be so in fact as well as on paper, Bulgaria is financially in a position which many of the older States of Europe may well envy. Yet she has great necessities, which must be supplied if she is ever to attain that condition of prosperity which the natural resources of the country warrant her in expecting. Every facility, instead of a jealous opposition, should be offered by her statesmen to the establishment of new industries even by foreign capitalists. It will not long be possible to employ the rapidly increasing population in the cultivation of the soil. Perhaps the most clamant of her wants is a better system of railways. The two great railways in Bulgaria both cross the country from west to east, and all communication from north to south is most roundabout, troublesome, and expensive. Whether or not it is true, as is asserted, that there exists great mineral wealth which has never yet been touched, it is of vital moment even to the agriculturists to make the transit of their produce possible to more distant markets. The history of independent Bulgaria up to the present is a guarantee that whatever is done in these matters will be done cautiously. The prudence of her course hitherto, and the wonderful success which has attended the first steps of her career, must cause those which succeed to be watched with hopeful interest by all friends of freedom.

## AN ELECTRIC SPARK.\*

### CHAPTER VIII.—THE SHADOW DARKENS.

'GOOD-MORNING, my dear. I came on at once.—Miss Bryne.'

The doctor shook hands warmly with Rénée, who looked pale and anxious, and then held out his hand to the elder lady, who gave hers nervously, and coloured slightly as she encountered the wistful, searching eyes directed at her, while their owner was about to press her hand, but, as if recollecting himself, slid his fingers up to the wrist and felt the pulse.

'Oh, Doctor Kilpatrick, I am not ill,' she exclaimed quickly.

'No; but you are nervous and excited. Our little friend here too— Tut—tut—I beg your pardon, Rénée, my dear; I quite forgot that you have grown into a woman.—Now, then, before I go up to see him. Your note said a touch of faintness after I had gone.'

'Yes; and he frightened us terribly,' said Rénée, in an agitated voice. 'Is he going to be very ill?'

\* Copyright reserved in the United States of America.

'Not if I can help it, my dear. Look here: I am going to prescribe a magnificent medicine for him.'

'Instead of those drops?'

'No: to take with them. You must help me.'

'Yes, of course,' said *Rénée*. 'I begged him to stay in bed this morning.'

'I couldn't have treated him better, my dear. I shall order him off to Brighton or Weymouth at once. He must have rest, and you must keep him there.'

*Rénée* clapped her hands with childlike glee, and then accompanied the doctor to her father's chamber, leaving him at the door, and waiting until he called her in at the end of a few minutes.

'Come in, my dear: the visit's over.'

*Rénée* ran to the old man's side and caught his hand, looking from one to the other anxiously.

'You've done it now, *Rén*, my dear,' said her father with a grim smile. 'This fellow says I am to go down to the seaside at once, just when I am at my busiest time.'

'I tell him he's a bungler over business, *Rénée*, not to have people who can relieve him. He must leave the affairs to your cousin and that Mr Wynyan for a bit.'

'Yes, Papa; why not?' cried *Rénée* eagerly. 'I am sure that you can trust Mr Wynyan to do everything as if you were there.'

'Indeed!' said Dalton, looking at her so fixedly that she coloured faintly, and wished her words unsaid.

'Of course he will; and Brant too,' said the doctor; then slowly taking off his glasses and replacing them in their case—'Bless me, my dear child, how wonderfully like you do grow to your poor mother. But there; I must be off.—Now, Dalton, no nonsense. You know what is the matter as well as I can tell you, and it is your duty to follow out my advice. Come, it is sensible, is it not?'

'Oh yes; it's sensible enough,' said Dalton sadly.

'Then get up and go.'

'Yes; in a few days.'

'A few years!' cried the doctor angrily. 'You'll go to-day.—*Rénée*, my child, it is absolutely necessary that he should give up all business for some time. Take him down to Brighton for a few days, and make him idle in the fresh sea-breeze; have some drives, and at the end of a week go on to Dover and cross the Channel.'

'But my business affairs?' pleaded Dalton.

'Leave them to those whom you can trust, man, and rest yourself.—Got plenty of your drops?'

'Yes, plenty.'

'Then good-morning.—Mind, *Rénée*; I place you in command. He does not want a doctor, only a brave little captain to make him do what is right and take his rest.—You hear?'

'Yes; I'll make him,' said *Rénée*, and she bent down quickly to kiss her charge, while he retained her hand, as if it were the bond which held him to life.

'Write to me, and tell me where you are,' continued the doctor.—'Now, morning. Robert

Dalton, I've attended you and your family for twenty years, and you are the most unsatisfactory patient I ever had.'

The doctor left the room, and *Rénée* received her orders: to send to the offices at once for Brant and Wynyan. But the order was needless, for at that moment they were waiting in the drawing-room, where Brant's tongue was only kept silent by the presence of his aunt.

'I'm nobody, of course,' said Brant, a few minutes later, when, as soon as the sick man knew of his presence, Wynyan was summoned to the bedroom.

'Pray, don't be so pettish, Brant, my dear,' said Miss Bryne. 'I know what has upset you so, of course. It is your poor uncle's illness.'

'Then why didn't he send for me?'

'He will, of course, when Mr Wynyan has had his orders.'

'He won't,' cried Brant. 'I'm treated as if I were a schoolboy.'

Ten minutes later, though, his turn came, and he went up into the room, where Dalton received him pleasantly enough with Wynyan seated near the bed.

'Kilpatrick has ordered me away for a few weeks, Brant,' he said; 'and I shall have to depend upon you and Mr Wynyan here to see that things go right. Take my room, my boy, and make it your duty to receive any one who comes. Wynyan, here, will be within call, if it is any important matter beyond you.'

'I dare say I can manage, uncle,' said Brant coldly.

'Yes, my boy, of course. You'll write me a summary of how matters are progressing—daily.'

'Yes, uncle.'

'And when I come back, I will explain fully to you the drawings of our new invention. Of course I need not add that it is quite a private matter, and to be kept so. That is important.'

'Of course,' said Brant, who felt a peculiar tingling about the nerves in front of his ears, as if premonitory of a bad attack of neuralgia, while the palms of his hands grew moist, and, try how he would, he could not help stealing a glance at Wynyan, who happened to be looking at him.

'A guilty conscience needs no accuser,' says the old proverb; and Brant's face changed colour as he quickly averted his eyes, and felt as if he had never hated the young engineer so bitterly before.

'I don't think I need say any more,' continued Dalton. 'I am to rest, I suppose, and play at being idle, while you young fellows carry on the work.—Of course, Wynyan, nothing more will be done over the motor until I return.'

'Do you think there will be any communications from Government, sir?'

'No: they move slowly over these matters. If they do send, you will act as my representative.'

'Yes, sir.'

'I can't ask you, Brant,' said the invalid in an apologetic tone, 'for you know nothing about the matter. No one but Mr Wynyan or myself could deal with it.'

'Of course not!' said Brant to himself.



'I think that is all that I need trouble about.—Stop: Villar Endoza means something, I don't know what, but he dropped hints; and if there is anything important on the way, we may as well have it. They pay promptly. I'm afraid it is out of the British loans the Deconaguan Government has raised. I hope they will redeem their bonds.—That is all, I think. There; do the best you can, both of you, and remember I trust you.'

Taking this as a hint, the young men wished their principal a quick return to health, and left the room, Brant drawing back, for his companion to go down first, and putting on a haughty, supercilious air.

'It is to be war, then,' thought Wynyan. 'Pish! War with an overgrown, disappointed, spiteful boy. I will not see it.'

'Your uncle looks brighter this morning,' he said aloud.

'Perhaps so,' said Brant, indifferently.

'I shall be very glad to see him back.'

There was no reply; and upon reaching the drawing-room landing, Brant made an angry gesture.

'You were going to speak?' said Wynyan quietly, as he laid his hand upon the door.

'No, sir, I was not going to speak,' said Brant in a low, angry voice. 'If I did, it would be something about assumption and impertinence. This is not the office, where Mr Wynyan dreams of reigning supreme.'

'No,' replied the young engineer with a grave smile; 'but your uncle's house, where a little courtesy surely is correct.'

He turned the handle of the door and entered, Brant following with his teeth compressed, as he saw that Renée had joined her aunt, and both rose eagerly as the young men entered, Renée to at once hold out her hand to Wynyan.

'How do you think Papa looks, Mr Wynyan?' she cried anxiously as her questioning eyes met his.

'I think certainly better. More restful,' he replied.

'And you will save him all the trouble you can, so that he shall have no anxiety?'

'Your cousin and I will spare him in every way possible,' said Wynyan, reluctantly letting go the soft white hand which had responded with such innocent frankness to the warm pressure he could not refrain from giving.

'Thank you. I know you will. Aunt and I will keep him down by the sea as long as we possibly can.'

'Well, don't worry Mr Wynyan about it,' cried Brant, who could contain himself no longer. 'He wants to get back to the office. This isn't an afternoon tea.'

Renée flushed and gave him an angry look, which made him set his teeth harder; but Miss Bryne did not restrain her tongue. In her eyes, Brant was still very young; and telling herself that it was her duty still to form her nephew's character, she shook her head at him reprovingly.

'My dear Brant,' she said, 'I'm sure you must see that you are not behaving politely to Mr Wynyan;' and she shook her head at him again.

Fortunately for Miss Bryne's peace of mind, she could not read what passed in her nephew's mind. Like Shimei of old, he began to curse and call names, his mental shots being aimed at both Wynyan and his aunt.

'Mr Dalton is quite right,' said the former quietly; 'I do want to get on to the office.—Good-morning, Miss Bryne—good-morning, Miss Dalton; I hope you will have a pleasant stay at Brighton.'

'We shall have, I'm sure, if my father can feel at rest,' said Renée, once more giving Wynyan her hand and making her cousin writhe.

'I shall see you in the course of the morning, Mr Dalton?' said Wynyan quietly.

'Possibly!' replied Brant haughtily; and Wynyan went out, leaving Renée looking flushed and angry with her cousin.

But once more Miss Bryne took up the cudgels on Wynyan's behalf.

'Really, Brant, my dear, you are dreadfully rude to a gentleman who'—

'Gentleman!' burst out Brant, with a harsh laugh, as he fixed his eyes on Renée and talked at her. 'I call him an insolent, overbearing prig, who is presuming on the good-nature of Uncle Robert. Gentleman! A mean, sneaking, contemptible cad. That's what he is, and I'll let him see that he is not going to do as he pleases at the offices. A miserable, scheming hound!'

Renée turned to the window and stood looking out, so as to hide her mortification and disgust.

'He went the other way, Rén,' cried Brant with a sneer; and flushed and angry now, Renée faced sharply round and darted an indignant glance at him; but it had no effect, save to make him more angry, and he was about to attack her, when her defender came again to the front.

'Really, Brant, my dear, you are indeed unkind; I must say, this is insufferable,' cried Miss Bryne. 'To accuse your cousin indirectly of turning to the window to stare after a gentleman! It is shocking. It is really; you really are discourteous. We cannot quarrel with all this trouble in the way, and I'm sure I detest scolding, even when the servants are tiresome; but you deserve a good scolding now; and really, Brant, if you were a few years younger, I believe I should do again what I did that time you were away from Marlborough: I should box your ears.'

'Bah!' ejaculated Brant. Then to himself: 'Weak-minded, silly old woman.—All right, aunt; but instead of correcting me, try if you can't correct that foolish girl. It's quite time she was brought to her senses. But I won't worry you both with my presence. I'll go down to the office and see that things don't go wrong.'

He gave Renée a malicious look, and swaggered out of the drawing-room, leaving Miss Bryne fuming, and his cousin trying hard to master an emotion commingled of indignation and fear.

'I like,' she thought to herself—'I like Mr Wynyan, but— Oh no; it is not that. He is always kind and gentlemanly, and Papa

trusts him.—There!' she concluded; 'I will not be influenced by his spiteful words.'

Her musings were interrupted by her aunt. 'His temper is quite shocking, my dear, and I really am glad now that you did not take his pretensions seriously. I see now that you were quite right, and that you grasped Brant's nature better than I did.'

'Say no more, please, aunt, dear.'

'Only a few words, my dear. Of course there is some excuse for him, poor fellow. He is disappointed. Men are just like children: if they cannot have everything they want, they become cross. I've often said they are very selfish by nature. Then, too, they say spiteful and vindictive things. Surely he did not mean to suggest that you are a little impressed by Mr Wynyan?'

'Aunt, dear,' said Rénée caressingly, as she laid her cheek upon that lady's shoulder, 'do you want to make me unhappy, just when we are in such trouble about dear Papa?'

'Bless me! no, my darling,' cried Miss Bryne, kissing her niece affectionately.

'Then come along aunt, dear, and let's see to the packing. We must go by the earliest train we can.'

There was a peculiarity and excitement in Rénée's manner which did not escape Miss Bryne, who said to herself, with perfect truth: 'Really, I don't know though, after all.'

#### DEATH FROM SNAKE-BITE IN INDIA.

THE serpent is a creature which, for some reason or another, has never succeeded in achieving for himself an abiding popularity. Ever since his first effort in the Garden of old, his appearance among men has usually been the signal for their abrupt departure. His last bid for popularity was perhaps when, in association with Æsculapius, he posed as the healer of the ills that flesh is heir to. But he failed. For men could not so easily forget that among those ills was one that he had caused and that he could never heal. And so the bad name once given has adhered to him. He has pointed many a moral and adorned many a tale. He has supplied proverbs in the languages of all countries where he is known. He has been credited with powers such as the lord of creation himself is only just learning to use (was Eve hypnotised? we wonder); and very few have been found to say any good of him, though there is no more beautiful passage in Matthew Arnold's poems than that in which he describes how

In a warm bay  
Among the green Illyrian hills,

in days of old,

Two bright and aged snakes,  
Who once were Cadmus and Harmonia,  
Bask in the glens or on the warm sea-shore,

spending the evening of their troubled life  
'placid and dumb.'

In our cold northern climate, venomous snakes trouble us little; but as we move eastward and

approach the region where our race was cradled, the serpent (perhaps from unpleasant local recollections) begins to assert himself; and in India the curse is one the extent of which it is difficult to realise. There is literally no security from them: they will coil up in your cooking pans or under your pillow; they will stretch out on the top of your door, and drop on your head. In fact Indian snakes are guilty of all the evil deeds which a Rudyard Kipling or a Conan Doyle may ascribe to them, and the best that can be said in mitigation is that they rarely seem to bite Europeans. Of the poisonous kinds there are some twenty genera, admirable pictures of which may be found in Sir Joseph Fayrer's *Thanatophidia of India*. Of these the most infamous is of course the cobra (*Naja tripudians*), of which there are many varieties. 'Few objects,' says the authority just referred to, 'are more calculated to inspire awe than a large cobra, when with his hood erect, hissing loudly, and his eyes glaring, he prepares to strike. Nevertheless, they are not, I believe, aggressive, and unless interfered with or irritated, they crawl along the ground with the neck undilated, looking not unlike innocent snakes.' The reputation of being the most aggressive of all the Indian snakes is enjoyed by the *Ophiophagus elaps*; but more dangerous, perhaps, are the *Daboia Russellii*, or Russell's Viper, and the *Echis carinata* (the native *phursu*), whose bite causes death as certainly, if not quite as quickly, as that of the cobra. For the horror of the thing is that death—at all events to the native—is almost certain. It is a sad and remarkable fact that in dealing with a bite from one of these snakes civilisation appears to be nearly as powerless as barbarism. The district officers frequently complain that the natives, when bitten, content themselves with singing *mantras* or charms, instead of applying to the doctor. But what can the doctor do for them? He can excise the part bitten, he can amputate the limb; but if the poison has once got into the venous system, unless the bite was not deep or surgical aid was immediately at hand, no human power can save the victim.

The subject of the prevention of death from snake-bite is one which has for many years past engaged the attention of the Government of India. The annual Reports are interesting, but far from pleasant reading. In 1891 the mortality under this head was no fewer than 21,389; in 1892 it had fallen to 19,025; in 1893 it rose again to 21,213. In other words, in 1892, out of every 11,630 people in India, one died of snake-bite; in 1893, one out of 10,424. The fluctuations are probably accidental; but the state of affairs is real and deplorable enough. Of the total number of deaths, almost exactly one-half occurred in Bengal (10,797); next come the North-western Provinces and Oudh (4847), Madras (1498), and Bombay (1192)—all showing an increase on the preceding year's figures—while the one province absolutely free is the little province of Coorg, the smallest in India, but still with a population of 173,000.

Can nothing be done to prevent this fearful mortality? is the question which leaps into

one's mouth on reading such statistics. And the answer, unwilling as one naturally is to give it, appears to be in the negative. At least so much may be said, that years of effort have been attended with no success. One of the first attempted remedies was the offering of rewards for the destruction of snakes, coloured plates of the venomous kinds being circulated (at Sir J. Fayer's suggestion), in order to enable the natives to identify them; and rewards were actually paid in 1892 for 84,789, and in 1893 for 117,120; but this increase has, as we have seen, been accompanied by no decrease in the death-rate. And the system undoubtedly opened the door to many abuses. It is suspected, but not perhaps proved, that snakes were bred for the express purpose of being destroyed. And it is certain that many a dishonest penny was turned by killing them in June, July, and August, that is, soon after breeding-time, when they were immature, and therefore less dangerous. Moreover, there grew up a class of idle persons who made a living out of it, for the large reward offered made it a more paying business for them than ordinary labourers' work. Consequently, Government found it expedient to reduce the reward, and the destruction of snakes has not fallen off; for, as has been pertinently remarked, people still kill snakes when they come across them, only men do not now expressly go out into the jungle (and risk their lives) to find reptiles; and when they do kill a snake, they do not apply for a reward, because the amount is too small for it to be worth while to go and claim it.

Another remedy which is still being tried is the removal of all jungle and undergrowth (and especially prickly-pear) from the immediate neighbourhood of villages. If this has had no visible effect in diminishing mortality from snake-bite, it has at least not been without good sanitary results. But of course snakes do not live in jungle and prickly-pear alone. In Bombay it is generally believed that most cases of snake-bite occur in the fields; so, too, in Burma, where ploughmen and reapers in many districts now take the precaution of wearing leather boots. In Hyderabad, again, experience shows that it is during the irrigation of the fields at night most bites are received. On the other hand, in one district in the Central Provinces it was found that out of thirty-nine people who died of snake-bite twenty-eight were bitten in the house. Indeed, it has been asserted that the destruction of undergrowth tends to drive the snakes into the houses. This may very well be, and the house of the ordinary Indian peasant forms an admirable ambush for them. Of a district in Bengal it has been said that 'every house is tunnelled with underground passages leading to rat-holes, the vermin being attracted in the dry weather by the stores of grain left lying everywhere about in heaps or otherwise, and in the rains by the frogs which seek shelter indoors. The snakes enter the houses in search of the rats and frogs, and are able to elude observation by the untidiness and confusion in which all articles of furniture and cooking pots and pans are kept lying about. The people, again, do not sleep on platforms or bedsteads raised a foot or two

from the ground, but on the ground itself. Rats run over them while asleep; the snake pursues; the slightest movement on the part of the sleeper causes the reptile to strike. Rats and snakes are nocturnal in their habits, human beings are not; and therefore it is that there is scarcely an instance of snake-bite reported unless it is one that has been inflicted on a sleeping person at night.' Not a pleasant picture, but, unfortunately, only too true to life.

A kindred subject, treated by the Government of India in the same returns, is the destruction of life by wild animals. Here, too, the death-rate is formidable, and the efforts to reduce it have been nearly as fruitless. In 1891 the number of persons killed was 2861; in 1892, 2963; in 1893, 2804. Bengal again heads the list with a mortality in the last-mentioned year of 1660; Madras and the Central Provinces follow with only 274 and 256 respectively. The chief offender is of course the tiger, who was responsible for 422 of the deaths in Bengal, and for 124 out of the 178 that occurred in Burma. In the Punjab, thirteen out of thirty-seven deaths were caused by the bite of mad dogs. Among cattle, the destruction from wild beasts is enormous, amounting in 1891 to 70,822; 1892, 81,668; and in 1893, 85,131, of which 35,526 are returned as killed by tigers, and 34,404 by leopards. The increase is ascribed to the extermination by native *shikaris* of the deer which are the natural prey of these beasts. But the figures are hardly to be trusted: one Collector in the North-west observes the curious fact that more deaths of cattle by tigers were reported in his province in Christmas week than in all the rest of the year.

In dealing with wild beasts, the system of rewards is almost the only possible means of getting rid of them. But though the rewards are often as high as 300 rupees for a single transaction, and though a sum of 104,840 rupees was spent in this way in 1893, it is hardly a sufficient inducement to the natives, for the number of wild beasts returned as killed had fallen to 15,309 against 15,988 in 1892. Nor does the issue of free licenses under the Indian Arms Act appear to have had much effect, though the number issued had risen from 69,310 in 1892 to 69,931 next year. The fact is that the natives who take out these licenses are not sportsmen, and have no sporting instincts. Either they do not attempt to kill animals, but keep a gun merely to scare them away from the fields by firing it; or they want to make a living out of the sale of skins, horns, &c., in which case they kill everything they come across without regard to age or sex, but are careful not to molest dangerous animals if they can avoid it.

The whole matter is certainly one which deserves attention; but it is difficult to see what can be done at all events to reduce the most fertile cause of death. It is impossible to hope for the entire extermination of venomous snakes, and little short of that would be effective. But it is to be hoped that a more organised system, under officials specially appointed for the sole purpose, may be contrived in the future. For India is a country from whose

inhabitants self-help is not to be looked for; they depend entirely on the Government; and when the 'Protectors of the Poor' fail them, their plight is bad indeed.

### AN UNAUTHORISED INTERVENTION.\*

#### CHAPTER IV.

For his part, Jack Thorold paced the room in deep thought for a full half-hour after the lady had gone. But, strangely enough, his mind was not absorbed in himself and his present situation. If it had been, it might have struck him that his best chance of liberty would be to send a message through Dolores to his Consul; but it may be doubted if liberty, at least until the morrow, was his first wish. In the end, laughing at himself as a sentimental fool, he ate his supper and went to bed. Even there, the fantasies of his brain gave him no peace. All that night in his dreams, all next day in his waking thoughts, Dolores was before his eyes; the name ran in his head like music, the face haunted him, over whom no face had ever had more than a fleeting influence. And between them, all the while, there was always the shadow of Don Juan Tovar. So the day sped, and his only other recreation was an attempt to sound the soldier who brought him his meals. It was not highly successful. Asked how the rebellion in the streets had gone, the man gruffly replied that it had been suppressed—which might or might not be true—and (with an unholy glee) that thirty of the 'factious' had been shot that morning in the Plaza. 'It may be the señor's turn to-morrow, *quien sabe?*' he added, by way of consolation.

'Perhaps,' said Jack, indifferently.

As the afternoon crept on, he began to count the hours that would elapse ere he could hope for Dolores's visit. At last darkness fell; and when the humorous attendant came with the lamp and his supper, he was not too much preoccupied to remark that the fellow seemed reluctant to leave him.

'Well?' he asked.

'It is nothing,' said he; 'but I thought perhaps the señor would like to see a priest.'

'A priest! Why should I, in all the world?'

The man grinned significantly. 'It is usual—unless the señor has turned heretic in his travels.'

Then Jack understood.

'So it is settled?' he said, pulling himself together.

'St. The order has just arrived from General Ferreira. To-morrow morning at eight, in the Plaza. And if the señor does not wish a priest'—

'Thanks, but I should prefer paper and ink. Will you give the Governor my regards, and ask if I may have them?'—and he slipped a coin into the man's hand.

'It is a matter of taste,' he answered, shrugging his shoulders. 'Still, your Excellency may depend upon me.'

And Jack, left to digest the unwelcome news,

was confronted with this new fear: what if Dolores should be unable to return?

Jack, it is needless to say, had no burning desire to sacrifice himself on the Plaza for the ultimate benefit of a beggarly republic. His course, then, was plain: to act as if no help were to be expected from the outside. So, when the materials for writing were sent up presently by the accommodating Governor, he busied himself in composing an urgent letter to Mr Chalmers and a full statement of his case, trusting to the power of bribery to get them conveyed to the Consul in good time. It was while he was still engaged in this laudable task that a familiar sound at the door brought him hastily to his feet. To him, in his state of excitement, it seemed an hour before it was opened, and finding his hopes realised, he advanced eagerly to greet Dolores Alvarado.

'You cannot imagine how welcome you are, señorita,' he said, when they were alone. 'The gloom of the prison-house has been over me all day, and now'—

'Hush! We must have no compliments,' she replied. 'We have no time for them, Señor Thorold. Your sentence has come from General Melgarejo, and if you do not wish to be shot to-morrow morning, you must attend to me.'

'I promise beforehand to obey.'

Laughing a little, she produced a piece of rope from beneath her cloak. 'Oh! you will find it very useful,' she said. 'Now, listen! All the arrangements for your escape are made. This is what you must do, señor,' and she went on to sketch her plan for securing the guard and getting beyond the door.—'You are sure you understand me, Señor Thorold?' she asked, anxiously.

'Perfectly. I was only thinking that it was quite romantic—like a page from an old romance.'

'Pray, be serious. You will do it?'

'You have my promise. And afterwards?'

'That you must leave entirely to me. If you obey me loyally'—

'Can you doubt it?'

'In that case, I will undertake to conduct you safely beyond the castle and beyond the walls. Just outside the city we have horses in waiting, and friends of mine will guide you to our army.—No, señor—this as Jack showed some signs of demurring—it will not be safe to remain in the town. If Ferreira catches you again, whether he is convinced he has made a mistake or not, he will shoot you like a mad dog on the spot—nothing, believe me, will save you!'

'I am not so sure of that,' thought Jack, remembering that he was trusted (and eager) for another meeting with the General. Only, it must be of his own choosing. For the present, he was altogether at the señorita's disposal; and after all, as he told himself, it might not be uninteresting to see some fighting.

'There is only one thing against us,' Dolores resumed, quite cheerfully: 'it is bright moonlight, and we may be noticed too soon. That, however, cannot be helped.—Oh! I had almost forgotten this,' she said, handing him a revolver and packet of cartridges. 'It was not my idea,



but it may be necessary to use it. There may be some trouble in the streets.

'Is there any fighting there to-night?'

'Everything is quiet—as yet,' she answered.

For the remainder of the half-hour the talk ran on as between friends of old standing—and, in truth, they felt more like old friends than the casual acquaintances of a day—and every detail was discussed and settled to the satisfaction of both. Jack was quite content not to trouble his head concerning the result. As long as his companion was confident of success, he was prepared to do his part; and he would have done it none the less willingly had the plan been a thousand times more foolhardy and impossible than it was. Over and above, the girl's spirits and high courage—wonderful at such a moment—were catching. Exerted on his behalf, they were also very fascinating. Thus he was almost sorry when a look at his watch showed him that the minute for action was at hand.

They rose together.

'Ready?' she asked.

Picking up the linen cover from the bed, he took his stand by the door just as the key was inserted in the lock on the outside. He nodded assent. The door opened, the sentry holding it in his left hand. Dolores slowly passed out, and then paused, as if she had forgotten something.

'An instant, if you please'—

It was the signal. Quick as lightning, while the man's attention was diverted, Jack flung the sheet over his head, gripped him by the arms and dragged him into the room. He was a little fellow, and easily managed; his gun dropped from his hand, and was deftly caught by Dolores; and, taken thoroughly by surprise, he made not the slightest resistance. In a second, the girl having softly closed the door again, Jack had tied him up in a workmanlike manner, and deposited him comfortably on his back on the bed. So far, all was well.

'And now?' asked Jack.

'Wait!' Going to the door, she listened for a little. 'The way is clear for us,' she said. 'Come!'

'And our friend here?'

'It will only be for an hour or two. He will be discovered when the guard is changed. Come!'

Jack delayed merely to gather up his papers, which he had no fancy to leave behind for the delectation of General Ferreira. Then, with his hand on the revolver in his pocket, he followed Dolores into the corridor, locked the door, and appropriated the keys. Everything was still as silent as the tomb: the beginning of their enterprise could not have been more propitious; and so it was with eager hope that, at the girl's heels, he traversed the lobby towards the staircase by which he had been brought to his prison on the previous evening. Here, instead of descending, she turned into an unlit passage on the same level.

'Give me your hand,' she whispered.

He did so; and for the next five minutes they groped their way through a labyrinth of narrow and tortuous corridors, twisting in this direction and that, now stumbling unexpectedly

down a flight of steps, now knocking their heads against an inconvenient corner, and all the time without a gleam of light to guide them. Jack went on in sheer bewilderment: he could scarcely conceive how anybody could keep his bearings in such a place, but nevertheless found confidence in his companion's evident capacity. For Dolores appeared to have not the smallest atom of hesitation, but pushed onwards as if it were light as day—more slowly and carefully, perhaps, but not less surely—and drew up at last with a little sigh of contentment.

'No more darkness, thank the saints!' she said. 'But the worst is to come, señor! Now, there are more stairs hereabouts, and then—No noise; the utmost care, on your life!'

'I understand,' said Jack.

They moved forward inch by inch until they reached the stairs, crept cautiously down, and then, as they rounded a corner, their eyes were dazzled by a sudden blaze of light—or what, for a moment, seemed so to them. It came really from a single oil-lamp, of perhaps two-candle power: proof that they were again in an inhabited part of the building. Nobody was about, however; and, holding their breath, they pressed boldly on—through one passage after another, stopping once or twice in trepidation as the echo of distant footfalls came to them, and in constant dread lest the noise of their own should bring the garrison about their ears. But their luck did not desert them, although they had a bad second in crossing an intersecting lobby, at one end of which they caught a glimpse through an open doorway of a number of soldiers. And presently, their corridor terminating apparently in a dead wall, Dolores went unhesitatingly to a door and tried it. It was unlocked; and, passing through, they were once more in darkness.

'Only for a minute, Señor Thorold,' she whispered.

He was about to blurt out that he preferred it so, but checked himself in time. 'I have been wondering how much your friend the Governor knows of this escapade,' he remarked, to hide his slip.

'It might be injudicious to inquire,' said she, laughing softly.

When they had covered some fifty yards in a straight line, she halted again. 'Have you the revolver ready?' she asked.

'Yes.'

'It may not be necessary; but—For this is the critical spot, señor. Do you stay here while I reconnoitre.'

She was off before he could object; and in a little he felt a welcome draught of fresh air on his face, and saw her head framed in a narrow opening against a patch of moonlit sky. He heard, too, the indubitable tramp of a military footstep. A weary minute elapsed—another, and the steps seemed to recede—then the opening widened, and she beckoned to him to advance. In a second he was beside her in the open air. He perceived at a glance that they stood in a kind of bastion at an angle of the battlements, and for the time being were out of sight of the patrolling sentinel—perceived also that the man's beat lay in the full moonlight, while they were in shadow. Then

Dolores pulled him into the farthest corner of the bastion, and crouched down by the low rampart that here rounded it off. They heard the sentry approach with slow precision, and doubtless their hearts went faster as he stepped into view, looked carelessly round, turned—and disappeared, unsuspecting. What next? Jack wondered. He was at a loss to guess.

'Over!' ordered Dolores, jumping to her feet. Jack hesitated: he was not sure if he had heard right.

'Over!' she repeated peremptorily, and dispelled all doubt by setting the example. Jack, still wondering, had perforce to climb the wall in her wake; and assuredly the wonder was not lessened when he found himself beside her on a narrow ledge, and saw below them a hundred feet or so of steep descent, that appeared all the blacker and more precarious by contrast with the moonlit expanse at the bottom. But Dolores gave him no leisure to weigh the risks. Whispering to him to follow her closely, she set off at once—not straight down-hill, but zig-zagging in a manner that bespoke some knowledge of the ground. To this day, Jack has a lively recollection of the experience. It was coarse grass under foot, with here and there a clump of shubbery; and progress was necessarily slow, for a false step meant a speedier journey than was quite desirable. To him, at least, it savoured of the miraculous that they reached the bottom without accident. Somehow or other, however, it was done. The descent became less and less precipitous, until at last it merged gradually into the level, and they paused to breathe themselves on the brink of the deep shade. As by a common impulse, they glanced behind at the great mass of the castle. On that side it was all dark, save where the moonlight struck on the corner bastion—and, as they looked, was reflected by something bright. Was it the bayonet of the sentry? The same idea was in their minds: that their perils were not yet over; for to gain the nearest cover, which was a line of wood two hundred yards in front of them, they must cross the patch of moonlit surface in full view of the battlements.

'If he sees us?' asked Jack.

'Doubtless he will fire—give the alarm. It is the last risk, and a small one.' She took his hand again, laughingly. 'Shall we run for it, Señor Thorold?'

It was the wiser course—short of waiting for an indefinite time, the only one—and they acted upon it on the instant. They could hardly hope for complete immunity; but they were more than half-way across, and were beginning to congratulate themselves on their good fortune, before the expected happened. Then a challenge broke the silence: 'Quien vive?'

They raced on, hastening their pace somewhat. Not more than seventy yards lay between them and the wood.

'Halt—or I fire!'

A minute: the trees began to take shape before their eyes: then, the threat having had no effect, the report of a shot rang out. Jack started as the ball whistled past his ear; Dolores, woman-like, uttered a little scream. Yet they rushed on, unheeding, and next moment reached

the border of the wood—only to run into the arms of a man who stood there, leaning motionless on a rifle. Jack, almost instinctively, threw up his revolver.

Dolores caught his arm. 'No, no!' she cried, breathlessly. 'It is Diego—my servant.'

'All is well, señorita?' asked the man. He was an under-sized, wiry Ladino, and doffed his hat in civil greeting to the stranger.

'Our Lady be thanked!' replied she. 'You are ready, Diego? Listen!'—this as they heard the din of a sudden commotion in the castle behind. 'It is the alarm—quick! we must get Señor Thorold out of town at once!'

Diego shrugged his shoulders with proper contempt. 'Let the *falsos* catch us if they can!' he returned, but nevertheless led the way immediately into the heart of the grove by a narrow footpath, followed by his mistress and Jack.

A couple of minutes served to convince the latter that they were safe from pursuit. At first, their road lay through one plantation of fruit-trees after another, intersected by a bewildering multitude of little paths; and here, on Diego's lead, they hurried forward as fast as the nature of the ground would permit. Jack, one is sorry to say, paid no attention to the beauties of the scene—to the fine effects of light and shade, and the delicate fretwork patterns cast by the branches. For Dolores was before him; and it was of her that he was thinking with (for him) an unusual admiration, and of the resource and unflinching courage she had manifested all through the adventure. And if another and less admirable feeling struggled in his mind—a feeling of resentment against Fate, for other reasons than those concerned with that night—perhaps, on consideration, we should not blame him unduly for it.

Soon they had left the fruit-groves behind them; and when they emerged therefrom into a lane of low, poverty-stricken huts, and had perforce to slacken their speed, Jack was quick to notice that the girl—bravely as she strove to conceal the fact—kept pace with an obvious effort. She saw the concern in his face.

'It is the running, I think,' she said, smiling brightly. 'Please, don't trouble yourself, Señor Thorold: it will pass in a minute.'

'You must take my arm.—There! that is better,' he said, as she obeyed with a word of thanks. 'Now, don't be afraid to lean upon me as heavily as you can.'

Apparently they were now in the lowest quarter of the town, and for half a mile they had to traverse, under Diego's pilotage, a succession of dirty, malodorous alleys, careful always to walk in the shade, and so avoid the observation of the curious as much as possible. Not that they were pestered with attentions. The lanes were almost deserted; and except for an occasional knot of Indians of the gossiping sex, who scarcely glanced at them, they might have been in a city of the dead.

'The men are all in the streets,' explained Diego. 'There is life there, señor—and they have many scores to settle with the soldiers.'

'Then the fighting has broken out again?'

He nodded. 'Have we not tasted blood?' said he. 'And perhaps we are still thirsty, señor.'

Confirmation was not long awaiting. A few

minutes later, quite suddenly, the guide stopped dead; and simultaneously, as they listened, the ominous sound of firing reached them once more—evidently, too, from no great distance. Muttering into his beard, Diego hurried them on through a side-lane, out behind a church, and finally brought them to a standstill at the corner of a broad and handsome street. There, in earshot of the din of a hotly contested fight, he signed to them to remain concealed in the shadow of the sacred building.

'What is it, Diego?' whispered Dolores.

There was no need to answer the question; for, even as she spoke, a body of soldiers dashed past at the double. A quick exclamation of dismay escaped from her.

'Let us discover the worst, señorita,' said the Ladino, presently.

They had merely to peep round the corner to see the whole scene of wild disorder. Some seven hundred yards down the street, which lay half in moonlight and half in shadow, it was completely blocked by a vast crowd of soldiers and people, all struggling and swaying together (as it seemed to them) in the deadliest grips. Dolores, on her part, had but a glance for it. She realised two facts: that the soldiers were the nearer, and that the mob, which must have numbered hundreds, were plainly holding their own.

She turned to Diego. 'It is impossible!' she asked, as if hoping against hope.

'Quite!'

'After all our trouble, too—oh! it is hard,' she cried.

Jack looked from one to the other, ignorant of their meaning. 'Can we not go on?' he inquired, rather helplessly.

'Through a battalion of soldiers and that, señor?' demanded the guide. 'For that is our direction!'

'But surely there is some other way?'

'There, for instance?' asked Diego, pointing up the street. 'It is the Calle Mayor, and ends in the Plaza and a brace of cannon! We might go back, and round about; but it is a long and tiresome road, and perhaps dangerous—and there is the señorita to consider. If there were only the house of a friend near!'

'Is there none?'

Dolores shook her head, somewhat wearily. 'I know of none hereabouts,' she replied.

A sudden ejaculation came from Diego: 'Santissima! The soldiers seem to be falling back, señor!' he cried. 'We must hide—on the instant—this is no place for the señorita!'

## THE LONGEST TREK ON RECORD.

By H. A. BRYDEN.

THE Boers of South Africa began trekking at an early period of Cape history. In the first instance, it would seem, the Dutch settlers were driven to push inland, to pierce unknown mountain chains, to cross torrid and difficult deserts, and to brave the thousand-and-one dangers of a country teeming with wild beasts and savage men, by the unendurable harshness of the Batavian rule. As they moved inland, ever opening up fresh hunting-grounds and pastures, the Cape Governors, although at first

strongly opposed to this rambling spirit, finally gave way, and added to their revenues by granting revocable leases of the lands chosen by the pioneers. Year after year, these stout and patient settlers pushed steadily northward, allured by the abundance of game, and by the ever-growing desire to secure new pastures and shake off all evidences of civilisation. In course of time the nomadic life and its pleasures—and they are undoubtedly very keen—grew upon the Boers to such an extent as to become a passion; the *trek-geest*, or roaming spirit, is now deep in their blood, and has long been a recognised part of the South African character.

This thirst for travel still possesses large numbers of the frontier farmers, especially in the Transvaal, and impels them periodically to move before the advancing tide of civilisation, to quit their quiet homes, to seek new lands, and again to dare the manifold difficulties and dangers of the wilderness. To this day you will find the Boers, even of the long-settled districts of Cape Colony, crossing the Orange River, settling up the lower portions of great Namaqualand and the Kalahari Desert, and even casting their eyes on countries far beyond.

The 'Great Trek' of 1836, although little known to the outer world, furnishes one of the most stirring of all epics. The farmers of that great migration from Cape Colony, after suffering grievous losses and experiencing much treachery, finally broke the power of the Zulus under Dingaan, drove Moselikatse (father of Lobengula) and his Matabele beyond the Limpopo, and settled themselves in their present territories of the Transvaal and Orange Free State.

It was of course natural that the generations growing up within these Boer republics should remember and cherish the deeds of their fathers, the fore-trekkers. To this day, indeed, the names of Hendrik Potgieter, Andries Pretorius, Gert Maritz, Pieter Retief, Pieter Uys, and Louis Tricard are sacred among the Dutch farmers. They survive in many parts of South Africa. Pietermaritzburg, Potchefstroom, Pretoria, and Piet Retief are places that are well known even to Europeans. Boer mothers, living their quiet lives in lone farm-houses in the far-off veldt, or roaming still in wagons through the wilderness, yet recount to their children the great deeds of their forefathers. There are still very old people alive who were grown men and women when the emigrant farmers left the Cape Colony and entered the unknown interior. And there are still many more who as young children took part in the Great Trek and its dangers. Among these latter, President Krüger, of the South African Republic (Transvaal), is well known.

About the year 1875, although the Dutch farmers had colonised and settled practically the whole of the Transvaal and Orange Free State, things were not going altogether well with them. In the Transvaal, especially, there were signs of deep dissatisfaction in many districts. There had been numerous small native wars, in which the settlers had been 'commandeered' and led against remote tribes while their farms lay neglected. The republic was well-nigh bankrupt. These frontier Boers

have always had the strongest objection to taxation in any form, and taxes were only wrung from them with the greatest difficulty. Those in far-off places often declined to pay at all. Then, too, the British, from whose rule they had once trekked, were steadily coming into the country. Gold-fields had been discovered in the Eastern Transvaal, and diggers and prospectors were over-running the soil. The Afrikaner Dutchman hates a crowd; he loves to surround himself with a vast solitude, where the smoke of his neighbour's chimney is not to be seen, and where, amid his flocks and herds and the members of his own family, he can live his ideal life. Again, as their families grew up and multiplied, many farmers found their old acres too small for them. The African pastoralist requires a vast expanse of country, and the bulk of the Boers are almost purely pastoralists. A six-thousand-acre farm is considered a very small run in South Africa. Again, numbers of a certain severe sect of Boers, known as 'Doppers,' had become much disaffected towards their Government. There was talk of railways and other mad innovations; and the Doppers, and indeed most of the Transvaal Dutch, hated the very hint of such things. The views and beliefs of these primitive people the Doppers ('dippers,' Anabaptists) were grimmer than those of the most extreme 17th-century Puritan sectaries. They looked (and still look) upon themselves as a chosen people, having the heathen, literally, for an inheritance. They govern their conduct mainly by the severest teachings of the Old Testament, and they regard all native races as fit only to be slaves, mere hewers of wood and drawers of water for the white man.

In 1875, then, for all these reasons, a large number of discontented farmers had gathered themselves, with their wagons, wives, and families, and their flocks and herds, upon the north-west border of the Transvaal, determined to trek for a new 'Promised Land.' The ideas of the more ignorant of them were wild in the extreme. The geographers of two hundred and fifty years ago seem to have held a fixed idea that the sources of the Nile lay somewhere far down towards Southern Africa. Many of these trekkers, whose forefathers had been cut off from civilisation for more than two centuries, still clung to this belief. They expected to find the 'Nyl,' as they spelt it, somewhere to the north or north-west, and they fully expected, too, to find great snow mountains beneath which lay fertile plains and valleys, rich in pasturage, and abounding in game.

While the trek Boers were thus collecting on the Limpopo River—the Crocodile, as it is universally called in South Africa—a pioneer party under one Alberts went up to Bamangwato to obtain leave from the chief there, Khama, to cross his country on their way towards Lake Ngami, their first objective point. This party left the main body in May. Obtaining leave from Khama, they crossed the almost waterless desert of the North Kalahari—the 'Doorstand' (thirstland) as it is always called by the Boers—and reached Lake Ngami on the 20th June. From the lake they trekked up the Okavango River to the town of Moremi,

chief of the Batauwana (a Bechuana tribe inhabiting the Lake country), where for a time they rested. From Moremi's they struck south-west to Ghansi and Riet Fontein, two waters in the Kalahari, where they remained till 1878, by which time the main body of the trekkers was past the lake.

In August 1875 there were gathered at Liclutsi, on the Crocodile River, 128 wagons, the travelling homes of 480 souls, 1958 trek oxen, and a quantity of sheep and goats. Kreling was made commandant of the expedition; Louw du Plessis, field-cornet. Owing to various causes, chiefly the uncertainty of the reports as to the country they had to traverse, this great assemblage stood for two years idle upon the river, losing a considerable portion of their cattle from disease and the attacks of lions, and losing also, unfortunately, some of their own lives from fever.

Meanwhile, a second deputation had interviewed Khama. That excellent chief strongly dissuaded them from attempting the passage of the desert; if, however, they insisted on crossing, he advised them to go in small batches at a time, else the scant desert waters would give out, and their lives would be in danger. But the suspicious Boers, who could believe no good of a native chief, imagined that Khama gave this advice solely for the reason that he might attack them in detail, and thus destroy them. In a spirit of the maddest obstinacy, they determined to cross the desert together, with results, as will be seen, of the most terrible disaster. There had been some dissensions among the leaders of the expedition during these two years; and in 1877, just before the trek began, Du Plessis was elected commandant, with Erasmus as field-cornet.

From Liclutsi the Boers sent forward 7536 oxen and cows, 483 horses, 1034 sheep, 32 donkeys, together with 486 fowls, ducks, and geese. Then the main body started upon its trek, a trek rivalled only in years and sufferings by that forty years' wandering of the Israelites in the Sinaitic wilderness. Having sent on the bulk of their flocks and herds, the Boers themselves followed in three parties, each containing a large number of wagons. The time was June, midwinter, and the driest season of the year in South Africa, when no drop of rain might be expected to fall for months. The trekkers made their first great objective point Inkouani, a water situated in the very middle of the thirstland, midway between Khama's old town of Shoshong and the Lake (or Botletli) River. Inkouani lies respectively some sixty and forty miles from the nearest waterpits, neither of which affords any but the scantiest supplies. At Inkouani itself there are two deepish wells in limestone formation, sufficient, perhaps, to water five or six spans of oxen at a pinch. Each Boer wagon, it is to be remembered, is drawn by a span of sixteen or eighteen oxen.

What Khama had predicted speedily came to pass. The first party of the trekkers arrived at Inkouani only to find that the loose cattle sent in advance had drunk up all the water, and yet not been a tenth part of them satisfied. These loose flocks and herds went wandering in search of water over an absolutely waterless



veldt; thousands of them perished, and only 926 oxen out of over 7000 head were ever recovered again.

But now, quickly following upon the heels of the first parties, impelled by some dreadful mistake, or panic fear of Khama's people, came the whole of the trek. There, stranded in the heart of the desert, were scores of wagons containing hundreds of farmers and their families. Already the first party in their brief halt had suffered inconceivably; the scenes that followed beggar description. The very Bushmen of the desert to this day speak of them with awe. The pits were already choked up with dead oxen, which had fallen in, in their struggles to obtain water. These were cut out piecemeal, and the remnants of blood, filth, and water scooped out. For three days and nights the trekkers drank the blood of slaughtered animals, and the little water in their bellies. Mothers moistened the lips of their tender infants with blood, with a mixture of brandy and vinegar, and other dreadful substitutes for water. The blood was served round in tablespoons. Here you might see a group which had caught a sheep and were struggling for its warm blood, while others fought madly for the paunch and its moisture. Men—the feeblest of them—cast themselves despairingly upon the sand, and with their big Dutch Bibles in front of them, prepared for death. The bellowing of cattle, frantic and dying, the bleating of agonised sheep and goats, the cries of suffering children, all combined to add to the horrors of that dreadful time.

But there were indomitable men and women still at work. Some few trekkers and their wagons had with incredible toil managed to reach T'kilakani, forty miles farther on. These sent back supplies of water. Others struggled forward on foot through the sandy waste. Mr Hepburn, the missionary stationed with Khama, happened to be on the road, and brought in two wagons filled with water-barrels for the relief of the sufferers.

Somehow or other the trek managed to battle on. Some died, some few turned back; but the majority kept their faces doggedly westward, and set their teeth, and suffered. Numbers of wagons were abandoned; quantities of farming implements, furniture, and cherished household goods were cast away. For years these impedimenta littered the desert. Nay, as the writer came by Inkouani, some four years since, there still lay, in the sand, ploughshares, the tires of wagon wheels, and other pathetic mementoes of that disastrous time.

The journey across this terrible bit of thirst-land can as a rule be accomplished with stout oxen and constant trekking in about a week. But in the case of these poor people, sadly reduced and enfeebled as they were, the struggle lasted two and a half months. At last they struck the Botletli River, where, to their incredible joy, they found an abundant supply of water.

At Sebituane's Drift, some way up the river, a halt was called, and the expedition counted its losses. It was found that thirty-seven members of the trek, men, women, and children—principally the last—had perished from thirst and

hardships. Nearly all the flocks, herds, and trek-cattle had vanished. From Sebituane's Drift the party sent forward for aid from the trekkers who had pioneered the way two years before. These sent them back 183 head of cattle; other cattle and sheep were procured from the Transvaal and Bechuanaland; and, with the 950 stray cattle recaptured, the expedition, somewhat rested and recruited, pushed slowly on.

Moremi, the Lake chief, meanwhile had changed his mind. He was afraid of this strong body of Boers (ancient enemies of his race) coming through his country. He warned the expedition not to proceed. But the gaunt way-worn Dutchmen showed their teeth, dared Moremi to attack them, and so passed by Lake Ngami and Moremi's town without a battle.

Steadily pushing up the Okavango River, where they suffered much from fever, part of the Boers presently turned south, and were met, in February 1878, by the pioneer party who had gone through in 1875 at Debra, a feverish, unhealthy spot, in an almost unknown wilderness between the Okavango and Ovampoland. Here, again, were terrible scenes enacted. Numbers were stricken with fever and dysentery, and the miserable sufferers wandered in their delirium into the bush and forest and perished. The oxen had eaten of some poisonous herbage, and lay dead about the encampment in scores; yet the people were so reduced that they were found by the rescuing party eating the flesh of these festering carcasses. At Oliphant's Pan, where three hunters, Van Zyl, Botha, and Laurens, found 103 elephants embogged in a marsh, and shot them all within the day, forty-three of the trekkers died from fever; and at Witwater and other places their numbers were still further reduced. In this desolate and unhealthy region the main body of the trekkers seem to have remained for nearly two years, matters steadily getting worse with them. Messages were sent to the Transvaal and the Cape begging for relief; and in 1880, thanks to the exertions of the Cape Government, a quantity of supplies was with great difficulty forwarded to them *via* Walfish Bay, on the south-west coast. Eighteen families, meanwhile, despairing of ever reaching the 'Promised Land,' to which they had so long and eagerly looked forward, turned their wagons, and made their way painfully back to the Transvaal.

In September 1880, the main body of the trek was again united at Debra, prepared once more to push north-westward. There were then surviving 57 families (in all, 270 souls), with 50 native servants, 61 wagons, 840 trek oxen, 2160 cattle, 120 horses, and 3000 sheep. Trekking slowly north, hunting as they went, they once more struck the Okavango River, thence, passing through the country of the Ovampo, they reached the west coast, near Cape Frio, a little below Mossamedes. From Mossamedes help reached them through the Portuguese.

Finally, the remnant of this disastrous expedition, after years of wandering and unheard-of sufferings bravely and stubbornly endured, settled themselves at Humpata, a place a little north-east of Mossamedes. Since 1882 they have been quietly thriving at this settlement, hunting, farming, and occasionally assisting the Portuguese as mercenaries in native wars. The Trek Boers

of Humpata are described as splendid specimens of manhood (as well they may be after surviving the terrors of such an exodus), and have already established for themselves a great reputation in Portuguese West Africa. This unparalleled wandering of the Boers may, without exaggeration, be designated the longest trek on record, enduring as it did from 1875 to 1882.

### AN ANGLING IDYL.

THE Angler, like the Poet, rejoices in the return of spring, and 'the tender greening of April meadows' finds him by the river-side again. For the past few days 'the Old Un' has been undergoing a process of rejuvenation, preparing for his first angling holiday for the season among the hills. On such occasions he is always in great form, and though bordering on sixty-seven, is as active as any youth of two-and-twenty, and with far more 'go.' The fine morning air and the hill scenery of the Borderland, of which we are both so fond, puts him in the best of spirits. My old friend would, in fact, have cheered the heart of Izaak Walton himself: he is 'a good man and an angler,' fond of a walk, a talk, and a pretty face. Now we have a snatch of song, then some old Waltonian philosophy, and anon a bit of angling experience, an initiation into the mysteries and respective merits of march browns, hare-lings, corncrakes, blae and woodcock wings, and Greenwell's glories. To watch the veteran making up his casts on the day before a fishing excursion is a sight in itself, only to be matched by the business-like fashion in which, to save time, and if the railway compartment is empty, he dons his fishing boots and stockings just as we are approaching our destination.

Such walks are never dull. My friend is an enthusiastic lover of Robert Burns, and as we tramp along he delights in quoting appropriate 'bits' from his favourite poet. 'I never hear,' he will say—'I never hear the loud, solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of plovers in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry.'

'A man,' adds he by way of comment, with an emphatic tap on his snuff-box, 'that can thus put himself in tone and tune with such surroundings—that can thus let Nature breathe through as well as around him, tastes one of the purest joys that earth can give.' And then adapting himself to the rhythmic step of our walk, he will start off into *Ca' the Yowes to the Knowes*, or it may be that the moorland which is beginning to unroll itself before us suggests *O'er the Muir among the Heather*. Thus it is that he beguiles the way during our three miles of a tramp up the glen before we reach our fishing-ground. A country lassie tripping to market will look provokingly solemn as we pass, and then my friend, with a roguish smile, will exclaim: 'Who can pay a more graceful compliment to womankind than Robbie Burns!

Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears  
Her noblest work she classes, O;  
Her 'prentice han' she tried on man,  
And then she made the lasses, O.

Ay,' he continues, 'almost as fine that as Robbie's "trouts bedropp'd wi' crimson hail."'

Such a comparison might have left the listener in delightful uncertainty as to whether a lovely woman or a lovely trout held the higher place in the order of things, or at least in our friend's estimation; but that characteristic had long ago manifested itself, and was often jokingly remembered against him by his more intimate friends. It seems that in the quiet pastoral vale where he first met his future partner for life, there flows a famous salmon river, and so it happened that, one bright June morning more than thirty years ago, when bride, friends, and minister were waiting to celebrate and to witness the joining together in holy matrimony of the well-matched couple, the bridegroom could not be found. At that precise moment he was joined by a delicate trout-line to a salmon, and was careering down the river in consequence. The salmon had been 'on' for some considerable time, and as a result the bridegroom was 'a little late,' as he put it, for his own wedding. Looking back down that long vista of years, who can dare to guess the weight of that famous hymeneal salmon? I think it is Mr Andrew Lang who relates a somewhat similar experience, and possibly my friend may have read the article; but here I must say once and for all that I believe implicitly all that is told me regarding his angling experiences, and the number and weight of the fish he has killed in days of yore. I am not one of those who would cavil at a fairy tale or insinuate that all anglers are liars. When an angler reaches the age of sixty-seven, he is to be excused if his incidents swell into legends and his legends into myths, until like a halo they envelop the whole man.

But to return to our walk up the glen. The road had hitherto led us through a wooded estate, and oh, how fresh, how delightfully green, everything seemed in these late spring days! Sometimes above the 'cushat's croon' we could hear far down in the bottom of the glen the river roaring over a linn. Sometimes, too, we could catch a glimpse of its cool umbrageous recesses, with its deep dark pools, concerning which my sage adviser could tell fabulous accounts of the water boiling with salmon, sea-troat, grayling, and herling.

At last we are on the open moorland, with the green hills rolling onwards like great rounded billows. The sight of the open country always rouses the old angler's enthusiasm. 'Now for the burn, my boy,' he exclaims, leaping the fence, 'and let's see what flies are on the water to-day. Man, look how they're loupin'! "like tumblers frae a spring-brod, head-over-heels," as the Etrick Shepherd used to say. These were the days; and oh the nights that succeeded the days, at "Tibbie Shiels's" and "The Crook!" But come, come; no reminiscences just now.'

I had so often been struck with the resemblance between my old friend and the genial Izaak, that it was something like a shock to see or hear the modern angler occasionally assert himself, instead of the 'piscator' of 'good king Charles's golden days.' I pointed out, for example, that in the *Compleat Angler*, among

Walton's first instructions on coming to the river-side were the following: 'Go you to yonder sycamore tree, and hide your bottle of drink under the hollow root of it; for about that time [nine o'clock], and in that place, we will make a brave Breakfast with a piece of powdered Bief, and a Radish or two that I have in my Fish-bag.'

Now there, curiously enough, was a sycamore just at the edge of the wood. Why not follow Izaak's instructions? My friend pulled himself together to make sure that he was listening aright, and then remarked, solemnly and with Johnsonian deliberation, that times were greatly changed since Walton lived; that if you hid whisky in such a manner, you might be suspected of keeping an illicit still; that water-bailiffs and poachers had the scent of sleuth-hounds for anything in the spirit line, and would sooner ferret your bottle than net the biggest trout in the stream; and that, consequently, it was a hundred to one if you ever saw your flask again. Having thus delivered himself, he handed me a thimbleful of his favourite blend, poured out another for himself, carefully stowed away the flask in his inside breast-pocket, and with all due solemnity began 'a angling.'

The solemn hour of noon found me on a warm sunny slope facing southwards—warm, I should say, for April, for though Robert Browning, writing in Italy, exclaimed, 'Oh, to be in England now that April's there!' we in Scotland find that our April is oftener more akin to that of the Fatherland of Heinrich Heine. 'My dear woman,' said Heine, speaking to one of the sun-browned dames of Italy, 'in our land it is very frosty and foggy; our summer is only a green-washed winter; even the sun there is obliged to wear a flannel jacket to keep from catching cold.' Basking, therefore, in this 'flannel sunshine,' whilst the veteran was having the first of the water in a deep gully a little way up stream, I seemed all alone with the dear old hills of the Borderland, alone but for a white-walled herd's cottage in the middle distance. Here, surely, is solitude! Here, surely, is the place to shake off all city cares, and stretching one's self on the grass, find perfect peace, if but for one short day, one short hour!

Yes, perfect peace, perhaps, but not perfect solitude, for the door of yonder herd's cottage opens, and a trim maid comes down to the river-side bearing a basket in her arms. Ah! where is our friend, with his quiet smile and his quotation from Burns? 'Her 'prentice han';' but no—no one can quote that passage like 'the Old Un.' Rather let us call to mind Allan Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd*, for it is evident that this is 'washing-day' at the cot, and that the herd's young wife or bonny daughter is coming to illustrate from the life one of Allan's best pictures in that delightful Pentland pastoral—

A flowrie howm, between twa verdant braes,  
Where lassies use to wash and spread their claes.

It may seem at first rather far-fetched, but such a scene as Ramsay describes, or as the maid is enacting yonder, always reminds me of some of Homer's old-world ladies, of the Princess, for

instance, whom the messengers of Ulysses met coming to the well for spring water; or, better still, of Nausicaa, 'ivory-arm'd Nausicaa,' whose name still lingers among the traditions of Corfu. Are not Nausicaa and her maidens the very counterparts of Allan's 'twa barefoot beauties?' Those Greeks washed their clothes in true Scotch fashion, steeping them in the crystal brook, and 'treading them clean with cleanly feet,' then spreading them on the wave-washed pebbles to dry in the sun. Ah! these high-born dames were happy as the day was long by their warm sunlit Mediterranean shores, 'the shores of old romance.' Contrast Homer's tale with our northern legends—with that, for instance, of the Princess Gudrun and Hildburg, compelled to wash in winter-time the clothes of the 'she-wolf' Queen Gerlind by the shores of the Northern Sea, whilst the bitter east winds were blowing through their beautiful hair and the scanty folds of their garments. The one picture is all warmth and sunshine, the other all snow-storm and east wind. This is local colour and climate influencing romance with a vengeance!

All this is not angling, however, and reminds one of Washington Irving's essay of 'The Angler,' in which he tells how he started enthusiastically with some friends to fish 'a mountain brook among the highlands of the Hudson,' and wound up with lying on the grass and building castles in a bright pile of clouds until he fell asleep.

My 'castles in Spain' were suddenly dispelled by a cheery voice ringing down the glen: 'Holloa, my boy! what sport? Gone to sleep again, like the fat boy in *Pickwick*? I don't know how long he had been away, but here he was with at least six good-sized trout, the smallest weighing a quarter of a pound. I knew that the inevitable story was coming of how 'a big two-pounder fellow,' &c.; and so I proposed having lunch.

'Man, this is a grand spot! What did you get in that pool?' asked the ancient as he sat down and regaled himself with a preliminary pinch of his best taddy. 'We only need your Izaak's milkmaid now to sing us that song of Kit Marlowe's.'

'One of Tom Stoddart's would suit us better. But had you been here half-an-hour ago, you might have seen as pretty a shepherdess as ever stepped out of Watteau fan.'

I then gave a circumstantial account of the visit to the stream of this daughter of the glen; and I observed that afterwards, as we passed the cottage on our way up stream, something like a sigh escaped our friend because the coy maid gave no sign of her dainty presence. After so much day-dreaming, it was now my turn to be up and doing; and as we both trudged home 'late in the gloamin,' neither had cause to regret our day by the mountain burn.

Those homeward walks are equally characteristic of my friend. Even as he absorbs the joyfulness of morning, so in the evening he reflects Nature's calm; and thus there is a strange impressiveness in his manner at such times. He notes the stars as they peep out

one by one, and his talk is often of that mysterious borderland which at his age seems drawing very near. Even his silence is eloquent as, with the pallor of the rising moon upon his clean-cut face, and his eyes fixed on a certain star low on the horizon—Sirius is his favourite—the old man seems to pierce in thought the veil beyond.

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who  
Before us passed the door of Darkness through,  
No one returns to tell us of the Road,  
Which to discover we must travel too.

### THE CARSTAIRS ELECTRIC LIGHT-RAILWAY.

At the present moment, when public attention is being largely directed towards the whole topic of light lines, it may not be inopportune to lay before our readers some succinct account of an interesting little Light-railway already in existence, which enjoys the additional distinction of being also the only example of an electric railway in Scotland. The Carstairs Electric Light-railway is worked by electricity derived from the Falls at Cleghorn, on the river Mouse, and extends from a large mansion-house in the neighbourhood to the main-line railway station at Carstairs. The line is a single one throughout its entire length of one mile and a hundred and thirty yards, and was constructed in the years 1888 and 1889. The available 'head of water' at the Falls is a little over thirty feet; and the turbine, which is of the Leffel type, is capable of developing, with a 'full gate' of water, thirty-two horse-power. As the site selected for the new turbine or water-engine had previously been occupied by a small mill actuated by a wheel of primitive construction, but little difficulty arose in adapting it for the more modern appliances requisite for the new undertaking.

Into the minutiae and technicalities of the electrical apparatus it is foreign to our present purpose to enter; suffice it to point out that the turbine already mentioned actuates a Goolden dynamo, capable of giving thirty amperes on continuous load at four hundred volts, nine hundred revolutions. The wires conveying the electrical current to the cars are of copper, and weigh about five hundred and eighteen pounds to the mile. They are secured on white china insulators on larch poles, and have all the appearance of an ordinary system of telegraphic communication.

The line traverses the 'policies' or grounds attached to the mansion throughout its entire length, and though it passes through several woods, no difficulty has been experienced in keeping the conductors free from the branches. The line is entirely unfenced; and the current is such that no danger can arise to passers-by from contact with the wires. A feature of interest in connection with the electric installation is the provision for current sufficient for the two hundred lights which have been provided for the mansion-house.

Turning now to the miniature railway itself: the maximum gradient is one in seventy; and the gauge is thirty inches, the sleepers being of

larch and fir, and placed twenty-four inches apart. The rolling stock consists of a passenger car and two luggage ones. The former has an inside measurement of six feet one inch by three feet seven inches, and is provided with a platform at each end. Seating accommodation is provided for six persons; but, as in lines of larger dimensions, overcrowding sometimes occurs, and no fewer than seventeen people have travelled in the car. The car is well lit by electricity; and its total weight with gear when empty is two tons.

The passenger car acting as a locomotive can draw the two luggage cars, each carrying one ton of goods, at a speed of fifteen miles per hour. Whilst running alone, the passenger car has travelled at a speed exceeding thirty miles per hour, the owner having made the journey between Carstairs Station and his home in two minutes, such time including starting and stopping.

Without descending to the details of cost, or cataloguing the various heads of expenditure, it may be stated that the entire outlay on the undertaking, including the equipment, was a little in excess of eighteen hundred pounds, a price which works out at about fifteen hundred pounds per mile, or a figure which should certainly warrant the extension of light lines.

The experience gained, moreover, points to considerable economies that may be carried out in future undertakings, and there is every reason to believe that the little line we have described in brief outline is but the precursor of many similar routes throughout the length and breadth of Scotland. The engineers of the Carstairs Railway were Messrs Anderson & Munro, the undertaking being the special care of Mr John M. M. Munro, C.E.

### SMOKED RIFT.

BRING me nor frankincense nor myrrh;  
Nor cassia breathing of the East;  
Nor roses such as filled the air  
At some superb Pompeian feast;

Nor lead me to yon minster old,  
What time the holy Mass is said,  
And clouds of incense rare are rolled  
In fragrant wreaths above my head.

But let me stand on this green hill,  
Beneath the chancel of the skies,  
And hear the thrushes' anthem-trill,  
And see the pale-blue peat-smoke rise,

And fill my nostrils with the breath  
Of fragrance that the west wind brings,  
As, sweeping softly o'er the heath,  
It fans my cheek with noiseless wings,

And summons from the forepast years  
Of youth, fair visions manifold,  
And summer scenes of smiles and tears  
In that old homestead on the wold.

T. BRUCE DILKS.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, Limited,  
47 Paternoster Row, LONDON; and EDINBURGH.